

Acknowledgements

This project's genesis was a talk by Ben Callahan at the Eastern Cabarrus Historical Society on the recently discovered war-time diary of MPCI student Ben McAllister. I introduced myself to Ben after the presentation and began peppering him with questions about MPCI. I was keenly interested in how many other students from the Institute had been in uniform during World War I. As it turned out, the research concerning the war-time service of MPCI cadets had not been conducted. As Ben put it, "Somebody should really look into it."

I decided to be that somebody and begin uncovering the stories of the boys from MPCI that served in The Great War. Ben not only inspired this effort, but he was a constant source of information and support. It is no understatement to say that this project would not have happened without him. Thanks, Ben.

Conducting research and writing is far easier if you have a research assistant and an editor. Luckily, I married a lady willing to serve in both capacities. From searching archival documents to critiquing prose, Emily McEntire was a constant. Thanks are also due to Denise McLain of the Cabarrus County Library for pointing me in the right direction on multiple occasions and to Barbara Gray for sharing materials related to her grandfather, Hilbert A. Fisher.

"A complete roster of Institute men who have been in the service has not yet been completed, but the number is large. Their records reflect honor upon themselves and the institution."

For many the town of Mount Pleasant, situated in Eastern Cabarrus County, is a pass-through as they traverse North Carolina Highway 49 on their way elsewhere. In their haste many are missing a fascinating piece of the county's history. Situated along the town's tree-lined Main Street sits the campus of the former Mount Pleasant Collegiate Institute (MPCI). Today, the nucleus of the campus houses the Eastern Cabarrus Historical Society (ECHS). While the buildings are a familiar sight in town, over a century ago it was a training ground for young men that went on to serve their country in The Great War. As the above-referenced passage suggests their records do indeed reflect honor.

The campus began life as Western Carolina Male Academy (WCMA), a college preparatory school founded by the North Carolina Western Synod of the Lutheran Church, in 1852. The Academy became a degree-granting college in 1859 when the synod changed the school's name to North Carolina College (NCC). The American Civil War proved to be more than the college could overcome and the institution closed its doors, not to reopen until 1866. Despite operating for the next several decades, the tumult of the war years did damage to the school from which it never recovered. North Carolina College closed at the conclusion of the 1901-1902 academic year. The campus once again became host to a college preparatory school, MPCI, beginning in 1902.²

¹ "The Collegiate Institute," *The Concord Daily Tribune* (Concord, NC), December 31, 1918.

² William S. Powell, ed., *Encyclopedia of North Carolina* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 809.

Like its predecessors, MPCI also received support from the Lutheran Church. According to the school's stated two-fold mission, the school sought to, "prepare thoroughly for entrance into the Advanced Classes of our best colleges those students who will take full advantage of the college course; and to give to those who will not take the full college course the training that will best equip them for their special work in life." Students engaged in a four-year curriculum. The first two years consisted of college preparatory work while the remaining years consisted of college coursework. Subjects taught included English Language and Literature, History, Latin, Greek, German, French, Mathematics, and Physics.

After opening as a traditional college preparatory school, the Institute began enforcing military discipline among its exclusively male student body, beginning in 1908. Struggling financially, the transition to military discipline attempted to boost lagging enrollment numbers. Students – now cadets – began wearing uniforms while participating in school activities. The required uniform, purchased by the student, consisted of a blouse, trousers, cap, and gloves. Additionally, cadets were encouraged to purchase a dress uniform. During warm weather, cadets dressed in khaki uniforms with duck trousers. The corps of cadets drilled for forty minutes four times a week for exercise and to, "develop erectness, precision and quick perception." The drills all came from the current edition of the United States Army's *Infantry Drill Regulations*. While it is a certainty that the cadets drilled with rifles, to-date there is no evidence that any live-fire exercises took place.

³ MPCI Catalogue for 1913-1914, Papers of the Mount Pleasant Collegiate Institute (MPCI Papers), Eastern Cabarrus Historical Society, Mount Pleasant, NC.

⁴ Ben Callahan (Eastern Cabarrus Historical Society), e-mail message to author, December 18, 2017.

⁵ MPCI Catalogue for 1913-1914, MPCI Papers.

The Institute's daily schedule reflected the desire to maintain discipline and give the young men as few opportunities as possible to fall into temptation. Each day began with reveille at 6:40 am, followed by assembly and morning inspection. After breakfast, the cadets gathered for chapel at 8:30 am. Studies took place between 9 am and Noon. After lunch, a period of recreation followed at 12:30 pm. The afternoon academic session began at 1 pm and ended at 4 pm. Once the day's classes concluded, drill took place at 4:10 pm. Students received an hour of free time between 5 pm and 6 pm, prior to dinner. By 7 pm, the cadets were back in their quarters, prepared for evening inspection. The lights went out at 10:30 pm. 6

MPCI recruitment literature made it abundantly clear that the Institute did not serve as a reformatory for troubled youths. Additionally, there were certain habits not tolerated by cadets. On the use of cigarettes: "Cigarette smoking stupefies the brain, unsettles the nerves, lessens the energy, and lowers the ambition, and hence militates against those ennobling principles for which Christian education stands." School administration took a hard stance against those found with contraband: "The Collegiate Institute feels that it is not its mission to waste time on young men who persist in habits that defeat mental discipline and development. Therefore, the use of cigarettes and intoxicants will not be tolerated. There is no compromise on this point. A student who indulges in these things thereby severs his connection with the Institute." The Institute catalogue stated plainly that young men looking to have a good time did not belong at MPCI. It is likely that the Institute's literature found more fans among the parents than the cadets themselves.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

The Institute's faculty, typically around six members, had one constant member: George Franklin McAllister. Referred to as "Colonel" once MPCI made the switch to military discipline, McAllister served as the Institute's Principal and Professor of Mathematics and Physics. More than that, however, McAllister was the driving force behind MPCI. After graduating from North Carolina College at the top of his class in 1897, McAllister joined NCC's faculty. The next year he added Principal of the Preparatory Department to his responsibilities. When NCC closed in 1902, the North Carolina Synod approved a plan by McAllister and local Lutheran minister L.E. Busby to open the Carolina English and Classical School (CECS) on the site.⁸

Big changes soon came to the fledgling preparatory school. First, Busby died in 1903 and the synod appointed Rev. H.A. McCullough as co-principal alongside McAllister. Second, CECS officially changed its name to Mount Pleasant Collegiate Institute. By 1908, McAllister served as the Institute's only principal. MPCI remained the focus of Colonel McAllister's life until the Institute finally closed in 1933. Even after closing, McAllister worked to revive MPCI until his death in 1937. Certain individuals become nearly inseparable from the institutions they pour their lives into; this is one such example.

Like many Americans, Colonel McAllister likely looked toward the future with a sense of trepidation on 6 April 1917. With the United States entering the conflagration known as the Great War, and instituting a military draft, MPCI men would certainly take the field in service to their country. The nation entered the First World War unprepared in virtually every way. Men experienced in military discipline, such as the type offered at MPCI, now had a role to play. Estimates vary, but the United States declared war on Germany with approximately 330,000 men

⁸ Ben Callahan (Eastern Cabarrus Historical Society), e-mail message to author, December 18, 2017.

⁹ Ibid.

possessed of any formal military training. Of these, 130,000 resided on the roll of the regular army while the rest formed the rosters of the National Guard and Army Reserve. ¹⁰ By way of comparison, the French Republic, had already suffered over two million casualties since August of 1914; more than 200,000 occurring within the first 12 days of fighting alone. ¹¹ Some 300,000 men voluntarily rallied to the colors in the first three months after the US entered the war. ¹² Thanks to the Selective Service Act of 1917, the ranks swelled to over 3,600,000 by 11 November 1918. ¹³

Included in these numbers are 171 men that received at least part of their education at MPCI. They hailed from five states: North Carolina (155), South Carolina (11), Tennessee (1), and Virginia (1). The overwhelming majority (151) of the men served in the Army, but the Navy (15) and Marine Corps (4) are also represented. More than one-third of the MPCI men either served as officers (15) or non-commissioned officers (45). As a whole, the men performed a large variety of functions: infantrymen, engineers, supply clerks, mechanics, aviators and even a veterinarian.¹⁴

As it turned out, a veterinarian earned the distinction of being MPCI's most decorated World War I veteran. William Henry Kern, of Salisbury, NC, last attended MPCI in 1906. He graduated from Salisbury High School in 1907 before enrolling at NC A&M (later NC State). In 1909 Kern continued his studies at Kansas City Veterinarian College, where he graduated in

¹⁰ Allan R. Millett, Peter Maslowski, and William B. Feis, *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States from 1607 to 2012*, 3rd ed. (New York: Free Press, 2012), 293.

¹¹ Robert B. Bruce, A Fraternity of Arms: America & France in the Great War (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2003), 39; David R. Woodward, The American Army in the First World War (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 17.

¹² Woodward, The American Army in the First World War, 55.

¹³ Russell F. Weigley, *History of the United States Army* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1967), 358.

¹⁴ North Carolina, World War I Service Cards, 1917-1919. Database with images. *FamilySearch*. http://FamilySearch.org: accessed 2017. Citing The North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh; Index of Mount Pleasant Collegiate Institute Students, MPCI Papers.

1913. He settled in Winston Salem, NC, where he became the city's first full-time meat and milk inspector. Dr. Kern married Trudie M. Welfare in October of 1915.¹⁵

It is reported that Dr. Kern volunteered first among the men of Winston-Salem when the United States entered the war. ¹⁶ The newly-minted 2nd Lieutenant Kern found himself assigned to the 6th Field Artillery of the soon-to-be famous 1st Infantry Division. His unit deployed on 29 July 1917 and remined in France for the duration of the war. ¹⁷ Veterinarians performed important work for the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) in France. The Army relied upon tens of thousands of draft animals to move the supplies and equipment necessary for its operations. Indeed, the artillery pieces and ammunition of the 6th Field Artillery moved via draft animals, making Dr. Kern a necessity.

We have the benefit of having the ability to read several of Dr. Kern's letters home as they made their way into print courtesy of the local newspaper. His accounts provide some interesting details about his experiences. Describing artillery barrages to his wife: "I am now farther in the rear temporarily, but can still hear the roaring of the guns at the front, and when the heavier ones are fired they jar the house in which we are quartered. Some time ago, before going up to the front and while quartered miles farther in the rear than now, the noise and vibration from the guns seemed as plain as here. At this point we are out of range of anything Fritz can send off^{9,18} One can only speculate on the impact these words had on Mrs. Kern, but it is unlikely to have alleviated her concern for her husband, despite his last line meant to reassure.

¹⁵ "Obituary of Dr. W.H. Kern," Winston-Salem Journal and Sentinel, March 19, 1950.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ "William Henry Kern," North Carolina World War I Service Cards, 1917-1919.

¹⁸ "Marksmanship of U.S. Troops Highly Praised," Twin-City Daily Sentinel (Winston-Salem, NC), March 13, 1918.

Kern relayed French opinions of American marksmanship, which are quite interesting: "The French say they have seen lots of shooting – guns of all kinds and sizes – but have never seen such marksmanship as the American display. If our men maintain their present record it will be a source of pride to every American." This comment is made interesting by the attitude of the AEF's commander, Gen. John J. Pershing. Pershing believed that the allies had become soft after years of slaughter in places like Verdun and along the Somme. He fervently believed the key to overcoming the modern industrial warfare of the Western Front centered on the well-aimed rifle fire of the American infantryman; a completely incorrect belief on the General's part that is best discussed another time. Suffice to say, the infantry rifleman struggles to achieve a level of accuracy capable of carrying the day against artillery, chemical weapons, and the rapid-fire of machine guns.

Dr. Kern shared at least one anecdote that is quite humorous in retrospect. In July of 1918, he and his comrades spoke to a group of German prisoners. The Germans expressed surprised at finding themselves talking to actual Americans. According to the prisoners, German propaganda claimed that most of the American transports rested on the bottom of the Atlantic, courtesy of the German navy's U-boats. As the story went, the soldiers across no-man's land wearing American uniforms were no more than British and French soldiers in borrowed clothing meant to harm German morale.²⁰ Unfortunately for the Kaiser, this claim proved entirely false.

The war ended for Dr. Kern on a rough note. Due to a bout with the deadly influenza outbreak, Kern found himself hospitalized in October of 1918.²¹ After making a full recovery, Kern reported being in the French town of Nice on a seven-day pass when news of the Armistice

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ "German Ideas About U.S. Troops in France," *The Twin City Daily Sentinel*, August 7, 1918.

²¹ "Dr. W.H. Kerns Ill with Influenza," Winston-Salem Journal, October 18, 1918.

began to circulate. Kern did not yet allow himself to think about home. As he explained to his wife, "It seems likely that the armistice will be signed and peace is at hand, but even with that there is still lots of work to be done, and it may be some months before many of us return home." Nevertheless, Dr. Kern did soon return home. He received his discharge from the Army on 21 January 1919.²³

In addition to his ticket home, Dr. Kern left France with something else: the Légion d'honneur, France's highest honor. The French showed their admiration for their American comrades-in-arms by bestowing more than 11,000 medals upon both individuals and units for bravery in combat. By the end of the war, 719 Americans, including Dr. Kern, received the Légion d'honneur.²⁴ By the end of January 1919, Kern returned home to Winston-Salem where he practiced veterinary medicine until his sudden death, at the age of 61 in March of 1950.²⁵

MPCI's naval contingent is well-represented by Hilbert A. Fisher, class of 1911. Fisher, from Salisbury, NC, continued his education at the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD. While at Annapolis, Fisher excelled in the classroom and lettered in baseball, leading the team in batting average during his last three years. Upon graduation from the Academy in 1915, Fisher received his commission as an Ensign in the United States Navy.²⁶

In February of 1917, the *USS New Hampshire*, a pre-Dreadnaught *Connecticut*-class battleship launched in 1906, moored in Norfolk, VA for overhaul. Obsolete for its day, the *New Hampshire* sported an armament of four 12" guns, as well as 20 7"-8" medium guns. While in

²² "Meets Another Local Man in the Service," *The Twin City Sentinel*, November 30, 1918.

²³ "William Henry Kern," North Carolina World War I Service Cards, 1917-1919.

²⁴ Bruce, A Fraternity of Arms, 216.

²⁵ "Obituary of Dr. W.H. Kern," Winston-Salem Journal and Sentinel, March 19, 1950.

²⁶ Department of Mathematics, North Carolina State University, "History of Math Department at NCSU – Hilbert A. Fisher," North Carolina State University, http://www4.ncsu.edu/~njrose/Special/Bios/Fisher.html (accessed December 26, 2017).

Norfolk, Ensign, soon-to-be Lieutenant, Fisher joined the crew. *New Hampshire* spent the bulk of the war training gunners and engineers in the North Atlantic until September of 1918 when she participated in two consecutive convoy escort missions between New York and France. At war's end, *New Hampshire*, along with Lieutenant Fisher, escorted four different convoys returning troops home from Europe.²⁷

Some people manage to lead fascinating lives. Dr. Hilbert A. Fisher was one of those people. After completing his duty on the *New Hampshire*, Lieutenant Fisher completed submarine training and served a stint aboard submarine *USS K-4* during the infancy of the U.S. Navy's submarine service. In 1920 he resigned from the Navy to become Professor Fisher in the Department of Mathematics at North Carolina State College (later NC State University). He returned to Mount Pleasant, NC to serve as co-principal of Mount Amoena Seminary, for three years, beginning in 1921. Fisher also continued his own education, earning a Master of Science in Physics from North Carolina State College in 1927. Fisher became acting head of the department of mathematics in 1932, a position made permanent in 1934. Lenoir Rhyne College awarded Fisher the LL.D degree in 1940. Dr. Fisher remained at the helm of the mathematics department at NC State until 1957 and is considered a founding father of the department. ²⁸ Fisher died in 1980 at the age of 88.²⁹

In an interesting turn of events, Lt. Fisher was not the only MPCI student aboard the *New Hampshire*. Boatswain's Mate Paul V. Fowler, of Charlotte, NC, joined the crew a week after

²⁷ James L. Mooney, *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships* (Washington, DC: Naval Historical Center, Department of the Navy, 1991) 5:55-57; "Hilbert Adam Fisher," North Carolina World War I Service Cards, 1917-1919.

²⁸ Department of Mathematics, North Carolina State University, "History of Math Department at NCSU," North Carolina State University, http://www4.ncsu.edu/~njrose/Special/DeptHistory/1932-1957.html (accessed December 26, 2017).

²⁹ Denise Steward McLain, "Fisher, Hilbert Adam," Memories of Mount Amoena, https://montamoena.org/fisher-hilbert-a/ (accessed December 26, 2017).

Fisher. Fowler arrived at MPCI in 1912, three years after Fisher graduated.³⁰ The two men both called the *New Hampshire* home until Fowler's departure in July of 1918. This naturally raises the question of whether or not the two men knew of their connection. At this time, there is no evidence either way. In the author's opinion, it is unlikely. The two men were from different home towns, and at MPCI years apart. In addition, the *New Hampshire* typically carried a compliment of 850 men.³¹ It is possible that the two rarely had occasion to cross paths. History has a way of producing more questions than answers. This, for now, is one of the surplus questions.

Another member of MPCI's naval contingent provides an interesting story. Thomas Lewis Hutto, Jr., of Vance, SC, left the Institute in 1916. Hutto joined the Navy 24 April 1917, less than three weeks after the US entered the war. Initially trained as a fireman, he rose to the rank of Fireman 1st Class aboard the navy's newest ship: the *USS Arizona*. Arizona passed sea trials on 3 April 1917, three days before the US entered the war. Admittedly, the ship and crew did not draw glamourous wartime duty. The technologically advanced vessel burned oil, not coal. Due to wartime shortages, coal supplies came easier than oil in Europe. As a result, older coal burning ships sail for Europe while many oil burners remained behind. That being the case, *Arizona* remained in home waters, patrolling the eastern seaboard and training gunners for service aboard other vessels. Now Engineman 2nd Class Hutto mustered out of the service on 11 November 1918, the same day that the war ended. A week later, *Arizona* set sail for England to join the convoy escorting President Woodrow Wilson to the Paris Peace Conference. Lewis

³⁰ Index of Mount Pleasant Collegiate Institute Students, MPCI Papers.

³¹ Mooney, *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, 5:55-57; "Paul Vestal Fowler," North Carolina World War I Service Cards, 1917-1919.

³² South Carolina General Assembly, The Official Roster of South Carolina Soldiers, Sailors and Marines in the World War, 1917-18 (Columbia, SC: South Carolina State Library, 1929), 1:551.

³³ Mooney, Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships, 1:379-381.

Hutto's wartime service aboard the *Arizona* brings to mind images of 7 December 1941. It is tempting to wonder how he must have felt when looking upon the wreckage of the ship he once protected from fire. Sadly, the answer is a tragic one. Thomas Lewis Hutto did not outlive his ship. He succumbed to tuberculosis in his native South Carolina in 1926 at the age of 30.³⁴

Necessity may well be the mother of invention; war, however, is usually its father. Military aviation technology and practices, still in its infancy at the beginning of the war in 1914, advanced rapidly during the war. The United States owned no significant aviation assets at the time the nation entered the conflict. Indeed, the nation barely had any officers flight-qualified. Being well behind in aircraft research and development, an embarrassing situation for the country that produced the Wright brothers, the AEF utilized aircraft obtained from its allies while concentrating on the training of pilots. Two such aviators hailed from MPCI. George A. Wagoner, of Gibsonville, NC, last appears on the rolls at the Institute in 1914.³⁵ He enlisted in the Army in January of 1917. In December of that year, Private Wagoner accepted a commission as a 1st Lieutenant in the 167th Aero Squadron. Wagoner's squadron only made it to France weeks before the war ended and the men of the 167th found themselves on the way back home in December of 1918.³⁶ Lieutenant Wagoner sustained an unspecified injury not related to combat. In this era of military aviation, a pilot faced as much danger, if not more, from operating his own aircraft as he did from any German foe. It stands to reason that Wagoner received his injury while preparing for combat. Still, after months of training and anticipation, it is easy to imagine Wagoner and his squadron mate's feelings of disappointment. After the war George Wagoner

³⁴ Find A Grave. "Thomas Lewis Hutto, Jr." findagrave.com.

https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/40311441/thomas-lewis-hutto (accessed June 2, 2018)

³⁵ Index of Mount Pleasant Collegiate Academy Students, MPCI Papers.

³⁶ "George Andy Wagoner," North Carolina World War I Service Cards, 1917-1919.

returned home and worked as an electrical contractor in Greensboro, NC. He spent the last three years of his life in St. Petersburg, FL, where he died in 1960 at the age of 66.³⁷

Billy S. Howell, of Charlotte, NC, did get his chance to fly in France although he likely left equally as frustrated. Howell last appears on MPCI's roster as late as 1913.³⁸ Like Wagoner, Howell initially served as an enlisted man. He accepted a commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in June of 1918. Assigned to the 185th Aero Squadron, Howell remained in France until June of 1919.³⁹ The 185th is known more for its methods than for its results. In fact, the squadron never scored a single aerial kill despite flying combat missions in France.⁴⁰

The record of the 185th Aero Squadron requires some clarification. In October of 1918, the pilots of the 185th found themselves in France without planes nor mission. Afraid the war would end without them, they soon received good news. First, the squadron received Englishbuilt Sopwith Camels to fly. Next, they were assigned a mission: the 185th became the AEF's first nighttime pursuit squadron. Military aviation made great strides during the war, however; nighttime aerial combat represented an unproven, highly dangerous new discipline. Between 18 October and 11 November 1918, the squadron flew 31 sorties across 8 different evenings. The records indicate combat occurring on only one of these evenings.

Naturally, flying in the dark, much less shooting down enemy aircraft presented an enormous challenge. Sent up to hunt German nighttime bombers, the pilot first climbed to an altitude of 6,000-12,000 feet. If all went according to plan, spotters on the ground used high-

³⁷ "George A. Wagoner," *Tampa Bay Times* (St. Petersburg, FL), 25 July 1960.

³⁸ Index of Mount Pleasant Collegiate Academy Students, MPCI Papers.

³⁹ "Billy S. Howell," North Carolina World War I Service Cards, 1917-1919.

⁴⁰ Maurer, Maurer, ed., *The U.S. Air Service in World War I* (Washington, DC: The Office of Air Force History, Headquarters USAF, 1978), 4: 29.

⁴¹ Ibid., 29-30.

powered spotlights to illuminate any inbound bombers they spotted. With the target now well-lit, the pilot would bring his Camel's machine guns to bear on the bomber. That sounds simple except for the fact that the spotters on the ground relied heavily on their sense of hearing to help them discern their targets. Of course, the noise coming from the friendly craft overhead muddied the water significantly. The solution? The pilots of the 185th spent their patrol climbing to altitude before cutting their engine off and gliding silently, in the dark, as long as possible before restarting the plane to regain altitude. This process repeated itself for the length of the pilot's 1½ hour patrol. The squadron lost three aircraft and one pilot, all while attempting night landings, during its three-week operation. Lieutenant Howell emerged unscathed, likely in possession of a new-found appreciation for sunlight. Once he returned home he remained interested in aviation as a civilian pilot. As a businessman, he served as secretary and treasurer of the Shaw Manufacturing Company in Charlotte until his death in 1949 at the age of 51 following an emergency operation.

It goes without saying that not everyone serving in the AEF's air service flew an airplane. Large numbers of auxiliary personnel kept the aircraft properly, supplied, serviced and flying. What is less obvious is that a great many men in the air service during the First World War did not go anywhere near an airplane, much less pilot one. Robert F. Wilhelm, of Salisbury, NC, fell into this category. Wilhelm completed his studies at MPCI in 1913.⁴⁵ He enlisted in the Army in December of 1917 and initially joined an aero construction squadron responsible for building

⁴² Ibid., 35-36.

⁴³ Ibid., 29.

⁴⁴ "Billy S. Howell Funeral Serivice this Afternoon," *The Charlotte Observer*, 24 April 1949.

⁴⁵ Index of Mount Pleasant Collegiate Academy Students, MPCI Papers.

airfields and related facilities. However, by June of 1918, Wilhelm transferred into the 83rd Spruce Squadron.⁴⁶

An important resource for the war effort, the American timber industry produced the spruce wood preferred for the construction of aircraft propeller blades. Even while remaining a non-combatant, the United States sold large quantities of the tough wood to the English and French. Once the nation entered the war outright, the spruce industry proved incapable of keeping up with demand. To correct the potential spruce shortage, the government temporarily federalized the logging, milling, and transportation of spruce in the states of Washington and Oregon. By the end of the war, approximately 27,000 men, like Robert Wilhelm and the 83rd Spruce Squadron, found themselves stationed in the Pacific Northwest, doing their part to defeat the Kaiser via the saw blade. The government's plan to boost production proved wildly successful: the spruce industry's production increased by 2,500 percent. ⁴⁷ Unfortunately, as so often happens in war, Wilhelm's story ended in tragedy. He succumbed to tuberculosis, which he contracted while in the service, in 1921 at the age of 29.⁴⁸

Of the 171 MPCI students to serve in the armed forces during the First World War, 88 deployed to Europe. It is not surprising that of these, 40 percent served in either the 30th (22 men) or the 81st (13 men) divisions. Both comprised of National Guard units, they drew heavily from North Carolina. Specifically, the 30th drew men from North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. General Pershing allowed the 30th, nicknamed the "Old Hickory" division in honor of Andrew Jackson, (along with the 27th) to fight under British command as a part of the British

⁴⁶ "Robert F. Wilhelm," North Carolina World War I Service Cards, 1917-1919.

⁴⁷ James J. Hudson, *Hostile Skies: A Combat History of the American Air Service in World War I* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1968), 12-13.

⁴⁸ "Rowan Soldier of World War Dies," Salisbury Evening Post (Salisbury, NC), 9 September 1921.

Expeditionary Force (BEF). The 30th entered the line on 24-25 September 1918 to participate in the British assault against the Hindenburg line – a line of highly fortified German positions. "Old Hickory" saw its first combat on 26 September when the 118th Infantry Regiment, including Private William H. Winecoff, of Concord, NC (MPCI 1915), advanced approximately 500 yards into German defenses as a preliminary to the larger attack to come. On 29th September, the 30th as a whole pierced the Hindenburg line and occupied the village of Bellicourt. The 30th then participated in the general advance until relieved on October 11th. "Old Hickory" acquitted itself exceedingly well. Twelve men, more than any other American division, earned the Medal of Honor. Success did not come cheap, however. Between the 30th and its American counterpart, the 27th, casualties for the operation amounted to 3,470 killed and 13, 279 wounded. ⁴⁹ Private Winecoff found himself among the wounded. His injuries occurred on 9 October – two days before the division's relief - are listed as "severe" on his record, although the full extent of his injuries is not known. ⁵⁰

The 81st "Wildcat" Division nearly missed the war altogether. Primarily made up of men hailing from North Carolina, South Carolina, and Florida, the 81st went into action on 9

November 1918 and remained engaged until the Armistice took effect on 11 November. ⁵¹ This small window of combat produced one of MPCI's four known fatalities during the war. William Z. Edwards (MPCI 1916), of Grimesland, NC, lost his life in the assault on 9 November. ⁵²

Adding to the tragedy, Williams' parents did not receive official notification of their son's death. Fred Edwards found his son's name on the casualty list printed in the local paper. Mr. Edwards wrote to War Department to inquire about the circumstances surrounding his son's death and

⁴⁹ Woodward, The American Army and the First World War, 318-320.

⁵⁰ "William H. Winecoff," North Carolina World War I Service Cards, 1917-1919.

⁵¹ Powell, Encyclopedia of North Carolina, 1229.

⁵² "William Z. Edwards," North Carolina World War I Service Cards, 1917-1919.

received a letter in response from the captain of William's company, John C. Warren: "On the afternoon of November 9th, after gallantly advancing with his company, and while in the act of continuing the advance, your son was struck by a large shell and instantly killed. This was the Meuse-Argonne offensive, November 9-11, 1918. Your son was a good soldier and was liked and respected by of all his officers and fellow soldiers. He always did his full duty without complaint and had so many friends that the company feels his loss keenly." He informed Mr. Edwards where his son's remains rested and assured him that he would receive his son's personal effects, along with the \$10,000 payout from war risk insurance provided by the government. Captain Warren closed by conveying his sympathies, assuring Mr. Edwards that he had every right to be proud that his, "son paid the supreme sacrifice while doing his duty for the betterment of humanity." Learning the details of their son's death likely brought some closure to the Edwards family. Still, \$10,000 and the feeling of pride is a poor return in exchange for such sacrifice, especially in what proved to be the closing days of the war.

MPCI's other fatality in France hailed from Mount Pleasant. Corporal Everett McAllister (MPCI, 1914) enlisted with Company C of the 6th Engineers Regiment, 3rd Division on 20 May 1917. Becoming the first man from Cabarrus County killed in the war, Corporal McAllister lost his life on 15 July 1918.⁵⁴ At the time, he was engaged performing electrical work in the construction of a railroad near Paris. In another cruel twist of fate which war is prone to creating, his mother received a letter from him on the morning of Saturday, 2 August 1918 letting her know he was well. The telegram notifying her of Everett's death arrived that very afternoon.⁵⁵

^{53 &}quot;Another Brave Pitt County Boy Makes Sacrifice," Greenville News (Greenville, NC), March 4, 1919.

⁵⁴ "Everett McAllister," North Carolina World War I Service Cards, 1917-1919.

⁵⁵ "First Cabarrus Soldier Killed in Present War," *The Concord Times*, August 5, 1918.

The following tribute, penned by the mother of several of McAllister's classmates, appeared in the paper the following week:

Just yesterday I saw him trudge down the street,
In his new knee-trousers, so clean and neat;
He was dreaming of great things – but not warfare cruel –
He was on his way to his "first day of school."

Just yesterday!

Just yesterday with the ranks of grey he marched by, With step full of "pep," toward the college nigh, To store up knowledge as the days passed by – (He was then a cadet at M.P.C.I.)

Just Yesterday!

Just yesterday his country called for men;
He changed the grey for khaki and tan.
Saying: "God grant me the power and chance
To carry Old Glory to bloody France."

Just Yesterday!

Just yesterday, in the dreadful battle that raged, 'Mid shot and shell that hell that hell he braved;

Just yesterday he gave his life —

A sacrifice for the Stars and Stripes.

Just yesterday!⁵⁶

The remaining two MPCI students to lose their life during the war fell victim to illness. Charles W. Misenheimer (MPCI 1909), of Concord, NC, died of pneumonia at Walter Reed Hospital on 27 April 1918. A member of the 20th Engineer Regiment, Misenheimer succumbed to illness before his unit shipped out.⁵⁷ Pneumonia also claimed the life of Giles Edgar Kindley (MPCI, 1916), of Mount Pleasant, NC. Corporal Kindley joined the United States Marine Corps

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⁵⁶ Jones, Jennie. "Just Yesterday," *The Concord Daily Tribune*, 10 August 1918.

⁵⁷ "Charles W. Misenheimer," *The Concord Daily Tribune*, May 18, 1918.

in May of 1917. He died of illness on 17 December 1918 while stationed in San Domingo, Dominican Republic.⁵⁸

While his former students donned the uniforms of the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps, Colonel McAllister remained at MPCI to seek enhancements for the Institute. With the massive build-up well underway in 1918, the War Department sponsored several programs designed to better equip American young men for service. Prior to the war, General Leonard Wood, then chief of staff, organized a summer camp in Plattsburg, NY to deliver basic military training to citizens as a way of promoting preparedness among the population. With the nation at war, Wood's "Plattsburg model" gained favor as way of preparing school-aged young men for future service.⁵⁹ In July of 1918 McAllister appointed Captain J.E. Schenck to Plattsburg as MPCI's faculty representative. ⁶⁰ Soon after, he detailed six students to Plattsburg for training: C.H. Honsees (Savannah, GA), M.G. Schnibben (Wilmington, NC), George Stelljes (Savannah, GA), M.L. Harkey (Charlotte, NC), L.V. Schenck (Mount Pleasant, NC), and C.J. Beaver (Mount Pleasant). 61 With their training completed, Captain Schenck and his pupils returned to MPCI better prepared to instruct the corps of cadets. Now a selling point for the Institute, the experience of the Plattsburg men provided, "what draft-age young men not prepared for college classes need and are looking for."62 The program offered promise for MPCI, however the end of the war in November curtailed the continuation of the initiative.

⁵⁸ "Funeral of Mr. Giles Kindley," *The Concord Times*, January 9, 1919; "Giles Edgar Kindley," North Carolina World War I Service Cards, 1917-1919.

⁵⁹ Weigley, *History of the United States Army*, 342-343, 399.

⁶⁰ "The Collegiate Institute, Mt. Pleasant," *The Concord Daily Tribune*, July 24, 1918.

⁶¹ "The Collegiate Institute," *The Concord Daily Tribune*, August 1, 1918.

⁶² "The Collegiate Institute," *The Concord Daily Tribune*, October 7, 1918.

Colonel McAllister harbored even larger ambitions for MPCI and its role in building the American forces. On 10 September 1918, McAllister visited the War Department in Washington, accompanied by a representative from North Carolina Senator Lee Overman's office. He hoped to have a Student Army Training Corps (SATC) established at the Institute.⁶³ The government began the SATC program in 1918 to provide military training for college students while continuing their education. A number of North Carolina campuses housed programs of this type on their campuses during the war.⁶⁴ Housing an SATC at the Institute meant the potential influx of government aide, instructors, and equipment. The Colonel's plan did not come to fruition, however. At the time of the Armistice, the plan to bring a SATC to the Institute still awaited approval and the government ended the program shortly thereafter. Despite not having a SATC program of its own, no less than 13 MPCI graduates went on to participate at their collegiate destinations, including the campuses of Trinity College, UNC-Chapel Hill, the University of Virginia, Catawba College, Davidson College, and Lenoir College.⁶⁵

With the United States at peace once again, life at MPCI continued on in much the same way as before the war. In 1931, the Institute received a blow from which it did not recover. The Lutheran Church withdrew its financial support in 1931. Colonel McAllister, using his own funds as well as those of donors, kept MPCI in operation for an additional 18 months. A casualty of the economic turmoil brought on by the Great Depression, MPCI closed permanently in 1933. MPCI began as the vision of one man: "Colonel" George F. McAllister. Today, it only exists in the collective memory of the town of Mount Pleasant, NC. Still, there was a time when

^{63 &}quot;Plan Military Training for Tar Heel Schools." The Concord Daily Tribune, September 11, 1918.

⁶⁴ Sarah McCullough Lemmon and Nancy Smith Midgette, *North Carolina and the Two World Wars* (Raleigh, NC: Office of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 2013), 68.

⁶⁵ Index of Mount Pleasant Collegiate Academy Students, MPCI Papers; North Carolina World War I Service Cards, 1917-1919.

⁶⁶ Ben Callahan (Eastern Cabarrus Historical Society), e-mail message to author, December 18, 2017.

the men from the Institute did their duty and answered their country's call to war. They did indeed serve with honor alongside their fellow Americans. Whether in France, on the sea, or stationed stateside, they shared a common bond: they were Colonel McAllister's doughboys.

Appendix

Index of MPCI Students Known to have Served in The First World War

Last	First & Middle	Years at MPCI	Hometown	State	Branch
Adams	Walter Clarence	1912-1913	Arcadia	TN	Army
Allman	Homer Mack	1915-1917	Concord	NC	Army
Allred	Roger P.	1910-1911	Mt. Airy	NC	Army
Auten	Frank Jordan	1910-1913	Charlotte	NC	Army
Auten	J.N.	1909	Charlotte	NC	Army
Bain	J.M.	1910-1911	Fayetteville	NC	Army
Barnhardt	John Jacob	1906-1909	Harrisburg	NC	Army
Barnhardt	Robert Lee	1915-1917	Kannapolis	NC	Army
Barnhardt	W.W.	1909	Concord	NC	Army
Barrier	Henry Webster	1910-1914	Mt. Pleasant	NC	Army
Barrier	George William	1910-1911	Concord	NC	Army
Barringer	Benjamin Alfred	1906-1911	Mt. Pleasant	NC	Army
Barringer	Phillip Monroe	1909-1914	Concord	NC	Army
Beaver	Jesse Leander	1914-1916 7 1917-1918	Rockwell	NC	Army
Beaver	Guy Moody	1910-1911 & 1912-1913	Mt. Pleasant	NC	Army
Beaver	William Berley	1909 & 1911-1913 & 14/15	Concord	NC	Army
Blackwelder	Clyde A.	1909	Concord	NC	Army
Blackwelder	Buford W.	1914-1915	Concord	NC	Army
Blume	Clarence Jno. Martin	1913-1917	Concord	NC	Army
Bost	Wilson Bailey	1916-1918	Concord	NC	Army
Broome	L.C.	1904-1906	Albemarle	NC	Army
Brown	Jesse Oscar	1912-1913	Salisbury	NC	Army
Calloway	F.E.	1909	New London	NC	Army
Castor	Bradshaw DeK.	1917-1918	Concord	NC	Army
Clark	Edmund B.	1914-1915	Lancaster	SC	Army
Cline	Frank S.	1909	Concord	NC	Army
Coleman	George	1915-1916	East Spencer	NC	Army
Cress	Jay Lewis	1912-1915	Concord	NC	Army
Cronenburg	Henry M.	1915-1916	Wilmington	NC	Navy
Crow	Vester Jesse	1910-1915	Salisbury	NC	Army
Crowell	Andrew M.	1913-1914	Concord	NC	USMC
DeArmond	William Orr	1916-1917	Charlotte	NC	USMC
Edwards	William Zeno	1915-1916	Grimesland	NC	Army
Efird	Fred Carl	1913-1914	Big Lick	NC	Army
Efird	Jerome Jasper	1904-1906	Albemarle	NC	Army
Eller	Lonnie R.	1913-1914	Salisbury	NC	Army
Eudy	Arthur Thaddeus	1913-1914	Mt. Pleasant	NC	Army
Faggart	Hendrick Miller	1906-1909	Concord	NC	Army
Fesperman	James Floyd	1914-1915	China Grove	NC	Navy
Fink	John Ralph	1914-1915	Gold Hill	NC	Army
Fisher	Arthur W.	1903-1904	Mt. Pleasant	NC	Army
Fisher	Hilbert A.	1906-1909	Salisbury	NC	Navy

Fisher	Guy Earl	1913-1916	Mt. Pleasant	NC	Army
Flow	O.L.	1909	Charlotte	NC	Army
Foil	Paul Baxter	1910-1911 & 1912-1914	Mt. Pleasant	NC	Army
Foil	Horace Elwood	1916-1918	Mt. Pleasant	NC	Army
Foil	Robert Edmond	1917-1918	Mt. Pleasant	NC	Army
Fowler	P.V.	1912-1913	Charlotte	NC	Navy
Fryling	Lawrence	1906-1909	Concord	NC	Army
Gluyas	J.O.	1909	Charlotte	NC	Army
Green	Abraham B.	1913-1914	Grylers	SC	Army
Grier	Thomas P.	1913-1914	Charlotte	NC	Army
Groover	Joseph W.	1913-1914	Savannah	GA	Army
Haley	Ralph Henry	1910-1911 & 1912-1913	Charlotte	NC	Army
Hallman	Felix H.	1906-1909	Leesville	SC	Army
Hallman	Will Lee	1913-1914	Marshville	NC	Army
Hamrick	Fred Garland	1913-1915	Gaffney	SC	Army
Hardesty	Wm. J.	1912-1913	Harlowe	NC	Army
Hardesty	John S.	1910-1911 & 1912-1913	Harlowe	NC	USMC
Harkey	Martin Luther	1916-1918	Charlotte	NC	Army
Hatly	Homer McGhee	1913-1915	Albemarle	NC	Army
Hawthorne	Clarence E.	1915-1916	Mooresville	NC	Army
Haynes	Junius Lawrence	1915-1916	Salisbury	NC	Army
Heins	Max Thomas	1906-1909	Salisbury	NC	Army
Heintz	Carl Monroe	1910-1911 & 1912-1913	Mt. Pleasant	NC	Army
Hester	Mark Evans	1914-1917	Easley	SC	Army
Hinson	George Dewey	1916-1917	Allen	NC	Army
Holloway	Harold Coy	1910-1917	Gorman	NC	Army
Houston	Ben Stewart	1913-1914	Mooresville	NC	Army
Houston	Den Stewart	1910-1911, 1914-1915, 1916-	Wiooresvine	IVC	Aimy
Houston	Mark Watson	1917	Harrisburg	NC	Army
Howell	Billy S.	1912-1913	Charlotte	NC	Army
Howell	Henry Raymond	1913-1915	Rockingham	NC	Navy
Hutto	Tom Lewis	1915-1916	Vance	SC	Navy
Johnston	Mark Caldwell	1910-1911 & 1912-1913	Newell	NC	Army
Johnston	Williamston Wilson	1912-1913	Newell	NC	Army
Jones	Hiram Denette	1912-1913	Thomasville	VA	Army
Kennett	Sam Boaz	1906-1909	Concord	NC	Army
Kern	W.H.	1904-1906	Salisbury	NC	Army
Kindley	Samuel	1904	Mt. Pleasant	NC	Army
Kindley	John Kenneth	1912-1916	Mt. Pleasant	NC	Army
Kindley	Giles Edgar	1912-1916	Mt. Pleasant	NC	USMC
King	Charles B., Jr.	1910-1911 & 1912-1913	Charlotte	NC	Army
Kluttz	Calvin	1910-1911	Gold Hill	NC	Army
Kluttz	Oren Everette	1914-1918	Rockwell	NC	Army
Krimminger	Nathan Bost	1912-1915	Bost Mills, NC	NC	Navy
Kuck	Jno. Clayton	1912-1913	Charlotte	NC	Army
Kurfees	Herbert L.	1913-1914	Germantown	NC	Army
Lathem	James Garrison	1912-1913	Easley	SC	Army
Lee	Robert Edward	1912-1913	Concord	NC	Navy
Lee	Robert Eugene	1913-1914	Salisbury	NC	Army

Leland	K.W.	1910-1911	McClellanville	SC	Army
Lenhardt	Wm. Richard	1912-1914	Easley	SC	Army
Linker	Chas. Edgar	1906-1909	Concord	NC	Army
Lipe	Clarence Houston	1910-1914 & 1915-1916	Mt. Pleasant	NC	Army
Lisk	R.E.	1909	Norwood	NC	Army
Lyerly	James Gilbert	1910-1911 & 1912-1913	Granite Quarry	NC	Army
Mangum	P.H.	1909	Charlotte	NC	Navy
McAllister	Ben	1904	Mt. Pleasant	NC	Army
McAllister	Everette	1912-1914	Mt. Pleasant	NC	Army
McAllister	Lee Edmond	1904	Mt. Pleasant	NC	Army
McCoy	R.O.	1909	Huntersville	NC	Army
McNeely	Grady Polk	1913-1914	Waxhaw	NC	Army
Mills	John Pinkney	1913-1914	Mooresville	NC	Army
Misenheimer	C.W.	1906-1909	Concord, NC	NC	Army
Monroe	Paul Eugene	1910-1914	Salisbury	NC	Army
Moody	J.H.	1910-1911	Albemarle	NC	Army
Moose	Jacob O.	1909	Mt. Pleasant	NC	Army
Moose	Cramer Banks	1912-1913 & 1915-1916	Mt. Pleasant	NC	USMC
Moose	Walter Lee	1909 & 1912-1914	Mt. Pleasant	NC	Army
Morgan	Shelby Val	1913-1914	Richfield	NC	Army
Murray	Edward	1910-1911	Charlotte	NC	Army
Murray	E.T.	1909	Burlington	NC	Navy
Newell	William Clifford	1910-1913	Newell	NC	Army
Nussman	Love	1910-1914	Mt. Pleasant	NC	Army
Patterson	R.L.	1910-1911	China Grove	NC	Army
Peck	Frederick Roy	1910-1914	Mt. Pleasant	NC	Army
Pethel	Carl Bryan	1916-1918	Concord	NC	Army
Petrea	Hugh Columbus	1912-1917	Concord	NC	Army
Porter	Charles Davis	1912-1913	Concord	NC	Navy
Price	Robert McCollum	1913-1915	Gold Hill	NC	Army
Proctor	William Jasper	1913-1915	Rocky Mount	NC	Army
Rahn	Charles G.	1914-1916	Stillwell	GA	Navy
Reap	Charles Augustus	1912-1913	Efirds Mill	NC	Army
Riddle	D.M.	1910-1911	Gastonia	NC	Army
Riddle	Jno. Albert	1912-1913	Clover	SC	Army
Ridenhour	Homer Lee	1913-1917	Concord	NC	Army
Ridenhour	Roy O.	1914-1915	Concord	NC	Army
Ritchie	Ralph Lee	1912-1914	Concord	NC	Army
Ritchie	Roy Homer	1912-1913	Concord	NC	Army
Ritchie	Ray M.	1909	Concord	NC	Army
Ritchie	Clarence Homer	1910-1914	Concord	NC	Navy
Ritchie	Hugh Steffey	1912-1917	Concord	NC	Army
Ritchie	Wade Hampton	1916-1918	Concord	NC	Army
Ritchie	David L.	1904-1906	Faith	NC	Army
Rothrock	M.V.	1910-1911	Thomasville	NC	Army
Rouse	Eugene D.	1910-1911	Augusta	GA	Navy
Schenck	Gordon Harry	1916-1918	Mt. Pleasant	NC	Army
Shimpock	Lewis William	1904	Mt. Pleasant	NC	Army

Shoe	Irwin Monroe	1912-1915	Rockwell	NC	Army
Shoe	Berley Davis	1910-1913	Rockwell	NC	Army
Shuping	Oscar Deberry	1903-1904	Mt. Pleasant	NC	Army
Sides	Ogden Oglesby	1914-1916	Albemarle	NC	Army
Sifford	Harvey Lee	1914-1915	Salisbury	NC	Army
Singleton	D.T.	1910-1911	Norwood	NC	Army
Sloan	John Gaither	1915-1916	Kannapolis	NC	Army
Smith	Martin Luther	1913-1914	Bost Mills	NC	Army
Starnes	Ernest Edward	1910-1914	Mt. Pleasant	NC	Army
Stirewalt	H.A.	1904-1906	China Grove	NC	Army
Summers	Everett Rivers	1906-1909	Columbia	SC	Army
Taylor	G.N.	1910-1911	Roanoke Rapids	NC	Army
Thomas	Irvin Morris	1915-1916	Salisbury	NC	Army
Threatt	Ward Beecher	1912-1913	Wilmington	NC	Army
Trexler	Harvey L.	1906-1909	Salisbury	NC	Army
Trexler	Clarence William	1913-1917	Salisbury	NC	Navy
Troutman	Martin Luther	1914-1916	Albemarle	NC	Army
Tucker	Milton Lee	1913-1914	Grimesland	NC	Army
Ury	Arthur Giles	1912-1915	Mt. Pleasant	NC	Army
Wagoner	George Andy	1913-1914	Gibsonville	NC	Army
Walker	R.H.	1906-1909	Concord	NC	Army
Watkins	Charles Duard	1906-1909	China Grove	NC	Army
Welsh	Steve	1904-1906	Monroe	NC	Army
Welsh	Dennis Barrier	1903-1904	Mt. Pleasant	NC	Army
West	George Elvester	1916-1917	Kinston	NC	Army
Whitley	D.P.	1909	Albemarle	NC	Army
Wilhelm	Robert Forest	1912-1913	Salisbury	NC	Army
Wilson	Geo. Wm.	1910-1913	Lowell	NC	Army
Winecoff	Wm. Hartley	1914-1915	Concord	NC	Army
Wingard	John Ralph	1914-1915 & 1916-1917	Mt. Pleasant	NC	Army
Wolff	Miles Hoffman	1915-1917	Concord	NC	Army
Worsley	Gaston E.	1914-1915	Rocky Mount	NC	Army
Yost	Lonnie Mitchell	1916-1917	Salisbury	NC	Army

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